Voice of Emmanuel

Love God, Love People, Make Disciples

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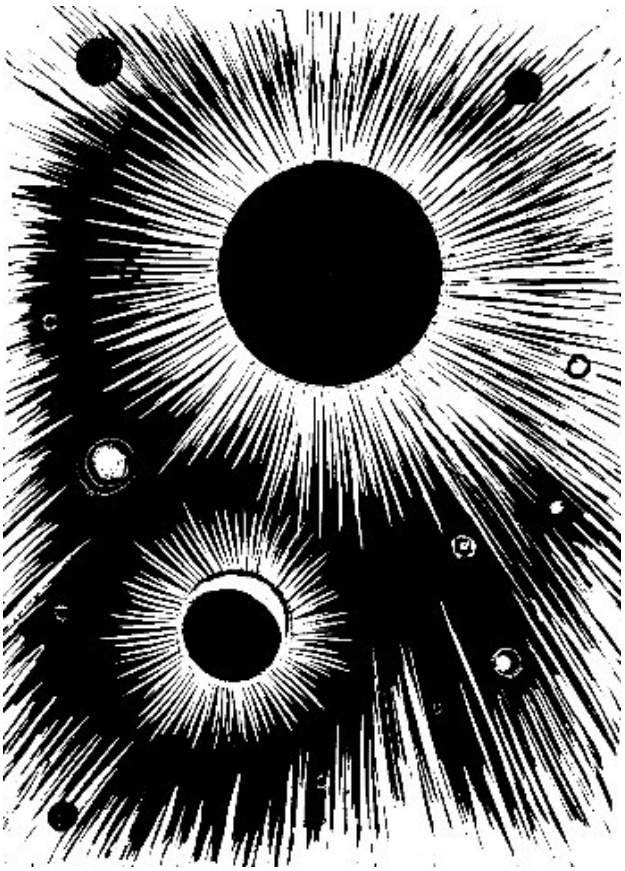
DECEMBER **2024**



When my son was born, I was awestruck with the magnificence of his life entering the world. It was both wonderfully joyous as well as somewhat frightening. Adorable, precious, and beautiful, yes, but he was also tiny, fragile, and lacking a manual, *printed* or *digital,* with troubleshooting section at the rear. I was suddenly *very aware* of all I did not know about babies and parenting despite my education, my experience with children, the classes my wife and I attended, and the reading I had done.

My fear of incompetence in the face of keeping a tiny human alive did not leave me the day he was born. Waves of this fear have swelled and ebbed as we made our way through his development. My wife succeeded in nursing our newborn every few hours to health and strength despite an inability to do anything but suckle and excrete. We made it through burping and pooping that seemed never-ending.

The same concerns were present at the birth of our daughter, though not as acute, for we had experience to suggest we might bring keep her without calamity.

Each of these phases brought their own joy…maybe *trials* would be more honest. We have managed, waited, through each. Each has been full, requiring attention and endurance, yet each has also had an endpoint…so far.

On this eve of Advent, I am reflecting on this favorite season. It's a season of waiting and preparation. Yes, looking forward to the arrival of Christ the baby born on earth, God appearing in the flesh into our own world…but that's the more obvious way of interpreting this time. Because Advent is also about waiting for God to arrive in a way we have not seen yet, one that we have read about in prophesies, but can't yet know. Because we are still waiting. We are still waiting for an end to war, terrorism to cease, hate to end, justice to arrive, love to rule…yes, Christ to come. While we work to alleviate hunger and poverty, decrease conflict, create justice in our relationships, we also wait. We wait for God's Kingdom, the Kin-dom of Christ to establish in a final and conclusive way what we cannot.

This Advent, we get a chance to reflect on waiting—for babies to be born or grow, for the Kingdom to come… We also get to practice waiting faithfully in a world primed for impatience. We have the opportunity to experience God's grace in our waiting, for even as we take joy, learn from, and gain in the journey through our many experiences of living in the *not-yet,* we *already* know of God's goodness and that God's promises are faithful—the time will come when these days will pass and God's Kingdom will rule.

It's not just that I can imagine my children getting their own food from the refrigerator. In the midst of forest fires, earthquakes, floods, atrocities and famine in Ukraine and Israel-Palestine, our nation still ill with racism, deep political divides, unjust incarceration, gang violence throughout central America, and war in numerous Middle East locations, signs of goodness and people living out grace abound… I think of emergency personnel and ordinary citizens who acted selflessly to save strangers from fast moving fires despite the risks to themselves. I think of the work of Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services) to shelter and protect Central Americans fleeing death threats and senseless shootings. I think of the work of non-governmental-organizations like Lutheran World Relief (LWR) to ease suffering and develop solutions for the most vulnerable across the globe. I think of the contributions from our community to feed impoverished elders and families undergoing hardship through our Food Pantry. I think of clothing shared through the Clothes Closet.

There is much work to be done, and yet I know God's Kingdom is coming, and the love we've known from Christ will rule forevermore.

Working faithfully, waiting steadfastly,

Pastor Joshua Rinas

MUSIC NOTES

by David Meitzler, Organist and Minister of Worship Music, Board-Certified Music Therapist

Oh this is the season for music, isn't it? I am partly joking when I suggest that because *every* season has its music. I want to spend a little time to explain how the Sunday worship music is programmed and address some questions I have received. I am the one who selects almost all of the weekly hymns and songs we sing at Emmanuel's worship services, but how and why?

The Worship Committee solicited comments and suggestions from the membership this past Reformation Sunday and they match what I have sometimes heard from in-person comments (and I *do* welcome feedback). I am paraphrasing when I recall them: "Let's sing more traditional music," and "Let's sing more contemporary music." You might notice that *traditional* and *contemporary* are arguably opposing ideas and we might even playfully think about *traditional contemporary* and *contemporary traditional* as separate music genres, too. Whoa.

Music is such an important experience for our life and we all come to church with a different music history, a sort of context to how we approach our Sunday worship services. The truth is, at whatever point we our in our individual lives, old or young, tall or short, preferring tea or coffee instead, we have our own favorite songs and styles; many of us like a little variation, and many of find comfort in the familiar and alternatively, some of us like both aspects. How is that for driving on the center line of the music road?

So how do hymns and songs get selected every week? Here it is! Here is a look in the kitchen before serving the meal! What I do is I review the planned readings and consider the liturgical season. For example, music during the season of Lent is different than during Advent or Easter. I also review what our worship aid service and music publishers suggest. Is there a special event or holiday on the calendar? Then I consider, "does the congregation likely know this music?" and most importantly, "is it singable?" and "can I play it?". Then I check a spreadsheet that has a record of *if* and *when* we have sung the song before - this wonderful document goes back more than ten years - a listing of every hymn/song we have sung at worship services. I usually avoid repeating a hymn/song if we've sung it within the past year. I also try to satisfy specific title requests from the membership.

I can tell you from a music therapist point of view, the familiar (music) is usually *comfortable.* Learning a new song isn't necessarily easy, and in fact can be stressful. But too many nights of meat and potatoes is also boring and tiring; aka not interesting. Too many new songs may not be fun either. So, basically every week, there are a couple traditional songs and there's usually something new. Traditional and new can be presented simultaneously through a familiar melody with new lyrics. When I believe a hymn or song is new to the congregation, I'll play a full introduction before we sing, or if it's something more familiar, I'll introduce perhaps only the refrain. Sometimes, a more contemporary song is presented as a solo during offertory or communion which is a great way to introduce it. Some music is written to be sung as a congregation and other music is meant to be featured as a solo performance. The music of a hymn/song can also be re-arranged to be instrumental or accompanied by singing.

But there is often a desire for freshening the music for worship services (this is an idea from congregations across America). How fast and how much is a discussion for another day. In the meantime, stay tuned and keep singing. If you have some suggestions for music you'd like to sing, please drop me a note. (Get it? *Note!*)

Happy Birthday to all who were born in December!
Patricia Elka, Londyn Priess, Richard Teall, Wendy Thompson, Don Farquharson, Miriam Ramirez, Sharon Meadows, Nicolas Westerberg, Nancy Karnatz, Joshua Rinas, Darlene Morin, Peter Diehr, Marilynn Stevens

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December 1st – ***First Sunday of Advent***

Poinsettia Orders
Poinsettia orders are due **TODAY**! Forms can be found in the Narthex, the cost of a Poinsettia is $8. Please put your order and payment in the offering plate or Office mailbox. Thank you! You may take your Poinsettia home after the 10pm Christmas Eve service.

Sunday Music Time with Jamie and Alexa
All youth are welcome to participate in an uplifting and informative weekly music class held in the music education room at Emmanuel. The class begins just after the Children's Message during the service and youth will return to their families around the offertory. Students will learn sacred songs, play musical games, and have a weekly dose of ear-training and basic music theory. Join us as we lift up our voices in praise!

Birthday Coffee Hour
Join us as we celebrate those born in December, with a birthday coffee hour from 11:00am – Noon.

December 7th

The Christmas Giveaway
The Christmas Giveaway is happening Saturday December 7! Nearly 100 families are signed up. Bring all donations new or gently used items to the Giving Tree in the Gathering Area by Wednesday December 4!

The Giveaway welcomes clients by appointment only. Appointments will be available from 9am-11am Saturday December 7. Anyone seeking an appointment can call the church office starting November 13 or email clothescloset@emmanuelypsi.org with contact information.

Please sign up to help! Volunteers will be needed to help setup and sort items on Wednesday December 4 (8:30-11:30am and 6-8pm) and Santa's Helpers will be needed on Saturday December 7, 8:45am-noon! Sign up sheets are available on the bulletin board in the Gathering area or on Signup Genius at https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C4BACA72EA3FD0-52482402-2024 Partial shifts are welcome, just note when you are available when you sign up. Have questions? Contact Karen Facer at 734-323-7925

December 8th – ***Second Sunday of Advent***

BSA Troop 290 – 2023 Christmas Greens Sale
If you ordered greens from the Scouts, you can pick them up at the back entrance of the church from Noon – 2pm. Thank you again for supporting Troop 290!

Confirmation Class – 11:30am to 1:00pm

December 11th

Quilting Group
We will meet from 11:00am – 1:00pm for the last time until January.

December 14th

Scout Saturday event and Overnighter
9:00am Saturday to 8:30am Sunday

Washtenaw Refugee Welcome
10:00am – Noon

MIOCA
Christmas celebration. 1:00pm – 4:00pm.

December 15th – ***Third Sunday of Advent***

Council Meeting
The Church Council meets every 3rd Sunday of the month after Worship services.

December 16th

Newsletter Deadline
If you have something for the newsletter, please get it to Jennifer by Monday, December 16th.

December 17th

Let's Go Out to Eat!
The Membership Committee would like to invite to a meal and conversation on Tuesday, December 17th at 5pm at Aubree's in Depot Town – located at 39 E. Cross St. Ypsilanti, MI. This is simply a social event meant for people to get to know each other better. If you have a friend who you'd like to bring who isn't a member at Emmanuel, they're more than welcome!

December 19th

Cookies, Cocoa, and Carols
Please join us in the church overflow area on Thursday, December 19th from 7:00pm -8:00pm for cookies, cocoa, and carols! Please bring some cookies and cocoa to share as we sing carols and just have some fellowship this Christmas season!

December 22nd – ***Fourth Sunday of Advent***

Children's Christmas Pageant
The Emmanuel Youth Christmas pageant will take place on December 22nd during the Sunday morning church service. Practices for children interested in participating will take place during services on Sundays in December. Please mark your calendars for a delightful retelling of the Nativity story.

Confirmation Class-11:30am to 1:00pm

December 24th – ***Christmas Eve***

Christmas Eve Services
There will be a Christmas Eve service at 6:00pm and 10:00pm.

Poinsettias
Don't forget to pick up your Poinsettia after the last Christmas Eve service. Thank you!

December 25th – ***Christmas Day – Merry Christmas!***

Office Closed

December 31st – ***New Year's Eve***

January 1st – ***New Year's Day***

Office Closed

January 2nd

Food Pantry
The Food Pantry will be distributing food Thursday, January 2nd from 3pm to 5pm, due to the holiday being on Wednesday.

SOCIAL CONCERNS - OCTOBER NUMBERS

Clothes Closet

116 families representing 374 people were served in October. The Christmas Giveaway is Saturday December 7! All donations need to be taken to the Giving Tree in the Gathering Area by Wednesday morning December 4. **No donations will be accepted from December 4 until January 8, when the Clothes Closet reopens!**

Food Pantry

237 families representing 610 individuals visited 443 times for servicing a total of 1112 people served. October attendance was an average of 88.6 families per week. 2023 attendance was surpassed mid-October. Emmanuel received 14,424 pounds of food valued at $24,607.45 all from Food Gatherers grants and the USDA. Want to join a village of volunteers? Come Tuesdays about 1pm for the Food Truck delivery or come about 2:30pm on Wednesdays and help with distribution!

A special shout out to all the volunteers on November 20! Thank you, Cheryl M, Patty G, Dennis D, Terri B, Karen R, Dee F, Kathy S, Bunny A, Kathy T, Don F, Nancy P, Nancy J and Roger F! Thank you for making success out of chaos as we set an all time record of serving 125 families at Food Pantry in 2 hours. I cannot thank you enough for all your hard work! Extra Thanksgiving food was handed out, including box stuffing, canned sweet potatoes, gravy, instant mashed potatoes and turkeys all from Food Gatherers. When the turkeys ran out, $7 gift cards to Meijer were given out so that people could purchase their own turkey. Meijer, Belleville Rd. donated 150 brown paper bags for the extra food to be distributed! Thank you all! Karen Facer

Quilting

16 red, white and blue lap quilts were donated to the VA Hospital at the beginning of November, just in time for Veterans Day! 12 full size quilts were donated to SafeHouse. And 12 full size quilts were donated to Michigan Donor Family Council. Quilting will only meet in December on Wednesday the 11th! But will be back to quilting the 3rd Wednesday in January and the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the months after that!

Don't Forget!

*Medical Loan Closet is officially closed. Please do not leave any medical loan donations at the church. If you need medical equipment, there is a medical loan closet at the Ypsilanti Township Community Center, 2025 E. Clark Rd., 734-544-8300. Information on other local medical loan closets can be found at http://www.loanclosets.org

*No Clothes Closet/Christmas Giveaway donations will be accepted after December 4. Clothes Closet will be closed after the Giveaway, December 7 until January 8, 2025! Donations will be accepted again starting January 8!

From the Membership Committee

Many thanks for the support that we have received in the past for the Blessing Bags which we try to fill with necessary items for those less fortunate than us. We are looking to replenishing our supply of Blessing Bags for the fall and winter. Below are some of the items needed to replenish the next group of bags for distribution:

Toothbrushes & toothpaste, Tissues, Toilet Paper, Sanitary Products for women, Gloves, hand warmers, Washcloths & soap, combs, small size deodorant, Shampoo, Conditioner, Hand lotion, safety pins, socks, hats, scarves, hand sanitizer, Juice boxes, Granola bars, Crackers & Cheese, Pudding, Jello Cups, Tea bags, Individual Instant coffee packets, Instant Oatmeal, Individual packages of nuts or other snack items, disposable cups, and plastic ware. Also, monetary gifts are welcome to enable us to purchase bus tokens, and any other necessary items. Individually wrapped items are preferred, but we are grateful for whatever you share.

There is an area outside the office for donations. And if you'd like to join us when we replenish the bags we would welcome your assistance. Please contact anyone on Membership for more information. Gratefully, Terri, Monica, Judy, & Linda

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Are you a Thrivent member?

Did you know that every Thrivent associate member has at one Action Grant every year that could bring in $250 for a special project, every full benefit member has 2 Action Grants every year. If you are a Thrivent member, please let Jennifer know in the church office. A list is being compiled to see how many special projects can be used to help Emmanuel this year and years to come.

Last year, Action Grants were used for helping purchase batting for the Quilt team, toys for the Christmas Giveaway and toiletries for the Food Pantry. Even if you have never applied for Action Grants, help is available so that you can help special projects.

Thank you for letting the office know if you are a Thrivent member, by emailing info@emmanuelypsi.org, leaving a message at 734-482-7121 or leaving a note in the offering plate or the box on the office door.

Ways to Give

Giving can be done online by clicking here. You can also give via text at 734-548-9438. Simply text the amount you would like to give and follow the prompts. You can mail checks to: Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 201 N. River St., Ypsilanti, MI 48198.

PayPal

Select payment type as "Friends and Family" using emmanuelypsi@gmail.com. Please indicate if it is for a special account (food pantry, memorials, etc.) where it says add message.

New Giving Mobile App

Download the Vanco Mobile app for free from the App Store or Google Play. From there, you can make a one-time donation or set up recurring giving right through the app. Just select your fund and amount, enter a payment method and complete the donation.

Would you like to reward your Emmanuel community?

You can now register Emmanuel as your designation for Kroger community rewards points ($). In your Kroger.com account, click on "MY ACCOUNT" and the bottom pick in the left menu is Community Rewards, where you can search for Emmanuel Lutheran Church or TG750 and then click ENROLL. Thank you!

Baked Noodles with Creamed Chicken for 50

Baked Noodles
2 and 1/2 pounds noodles
6 tablespoons melted butter
18 eggs
3 tablespoons salt
4 cups milk

Cook noodles in boiling (salt) water until tender. Drain and rinse with cold water. Beat eggs slightly, add butter, salt and milk. Add egg mixture to noodles and mix well. Pour into well greased shallow baking pans, cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees for about 45 minutes.

Medium White Sauce
1 and 1/2 cups melted butter
2 cups flour
1 tablespoon salt
3 cups milk
1 cup chicken stock

Add flour to melted butter gradually, stir until smooth. Add milk and stock gradually to flour mixture, stirring constantly, over low flame as this tends to burn easily. Cook until thickened. Add salt and pepper.

Creamed Chicken
8 chicken breasts or two 5 pound stewing chickens
2 and 1/2 quarts medium white sauce
8 cans cream of chicken soup
3 cups chicken stock
1/2 cup diced pimento

Cook chicken breasts in seasoned water until tender. Reserve stock. Remove skin and bones from the meat. Cut chicken coarsely. Add chicken soup and additional chicken stock to Medium White Sauce. Heat thoroughly over low heat, stirring constantly. Add cut up chicken and pimento. Serve over baked noodles.

Originally from K. Olson (there is no date on the paper)